(d) to (f). Confiscated snake skins and snake skin items are at present not permitted to be exported or traded within the country.

Mutual Funds

695. SHRI RAM NAIK: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the objectives for which the Mutual Funds were set up;

(b) whether an evaluation to ascertain the fulfilment of objectives was carried on;

(c) if so, the findings of the evaluation;

(d) whether a comprehensive legislation is under consideration to regulate the operations of these Mutual Funds;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the time by which it is likely to be made effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) Mutual Funds have been generally set up with the objectives of giving access to the Securities market for the investing public with a view to providing an attractive return on their investments.

(b) No, sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) to (f). This Ministry has issued on 14-2-1992 a comprehensive set of prudential guidelines for the development and regulation of mutual funds and for ensuring investor protection. The guidelines *inter-alia* cover scope of Mutual Funds, their establishment, restrictions on business activities, Trust deeds, schemes of Mutual Funds, investment limitations and disclosures and reporting. The guidelines also stipulate that Mutual Funds shall be authorised for business by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

Open Tender System

696. DR. LAXIMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to refer to the reply given on April 5, 1989 to Unstarred Question No. 4881 and state:

(a) the facts regarding Open Tender System;

(b) state of various Writ Petitions in the various High Courts and in the Supreme Court; and

(c) the amount of money collected under this Open Tender System and its disbursement till January 31, 1992?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) and (b). Under the Garment Export Entitlement Distribution Policy for 1988-1990, the Government introduced a new system, the Open Tender System, in respect of "Superfast" categories for which 15% of the annual quota was earmarked. Under this system, allotments were to be determined on the basis of premium offered by applicants over the minimum export prices fixed on various categories by the Government.

On a Writ filed by a section of the garment export, trade, the Delhi High Court struck down the system in 1989 as the Court held that the collection of premium amounts under the system was not legally authorised under the import-Export Control Act, 1947 and the Export Control Order 1977.

Government had filed a Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court challenging the order of Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court has admitted the SLP. While

admitting the SLP, the Hon'ble Supreme Court stayed refund of the amounts collected from the exporters under the system. The appeal is now pending before the Supreme Court.

(c) An amount of Rs. 56.62 Cr. had been collected as Premium amount under the Open Tender System during its operation. Out of this, an amount of Rs. 42.50 lakh was released during 1989 to the Apparel Export promotion Council for export promotion activities.

Economic Collaboration with Portugal

697. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposed to establish economic collaboration with Portugal; and

(b) if so, the details of the areas identified or agreement signed for the establishment of economic collaboration with that country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Fisheries and Food processing are two areas identified for possible joint venture projects between the two countries. An agreement of Collaboration was signed between the Portuguese Institute of Foreign Trade and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in New Delhi on 26.1.1992.

[*Translation*]

Functioning of DRD Laboratory

698. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of years since when Defence Research and Development Laboratory is functioning;

(b) whether functioning of the laboratory has been reviewed during the last ten years;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the expenditure incurred on this laboratory during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTR OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) Twenty nine and half years.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The functioning of this laboratory has been reviewed by Scientific Adviser to Raksha Mantri during September 1984 and February 1987. It has also been reviewed by Raksha Rajya Mantri during August 1986 and December 1991. In addition, specific Project/Programme Management Boards also periodically review the research and development projects under progress.

(d) Total expenditure for the last three years is Rs. 193.02 crores.

Sainik Schools

699. SHRI SUKHDEO PASWAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to open more Sainik Schools in the country;

(b) if so, the locations thereof; State-wise; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?